



**DOCTEUR  
RASU**



**HEALTH  
FOR SALE**

POSTERS FROM  
THE WILLIAM H. HELFAND  
COLLECTION



# HEALTH FOR SALE

POSTERS FROM THE  
WILLIAM H. HELFAND COLLECTION



Interview with William H. Helfand  
by Innis Howe Shoemaker

Catalogue by William H. Helfand and John Ittmann

PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART  
in association with

YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
New Haven and London



Published on the occasion of the exhibition *Health for Sale: Posters from the William H. Helfand Collection*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, April 2–July 31, 2011

This publication was supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Fund for Scholarly Publications at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

*Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin*, n.s., no. 3

The *Bulletin* is an occasional publication of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Produced by the Publishing Department  
Philadelphia Museum of Art  
Sherry Babbitt, The William T. Ranney Director of Publishing  
2525 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19130 USA  
www.philamuseum.org

Published by the Philadelphia Museum of Art  
in association with  
Yale University Press  
P.O. Box 209040  
302 Temple Street  
New Haven, CT 06520-9040  
www.yalebooks.com/art

Edited by Kathleen Krattenmaker  
Production by Richard Bonk  
Photography by Amanda Jaffe and Jason Wierzbicki  
Designed by Andrea Hemmann, GHI Design, Philadelphia  
Printed and bound in Canada by Transcontinental Litho Acme, Montreal

Text and compilation © 2011 Philadelphia Museum of Art

Works by Paul Davis © Paul Davis

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any other information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

All illustrated works are in the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art unless otherwise noted.

Front cover/jacket (clockwise from top left): Franz von Stuck, *Internationale Hygiene-Ausstellung Dresden (International Hygiene Exhibition Dresden)*, 1911 (cat. 25); Jules Chéret, *Vin Mariani, Popular French Tonic Wine*, 1894 (cat. 10); *Compagnie Fermière des Eaux de l'Ours, Puy-de-Dôme*, c. 1874 (cat. 6); Leonetto Cappiello, *Docteur Rasurel, "Sous vêtements hygiéniques" (Doctor Rasurel, "Hygienic Undergarments")*, c. 1911 (cat. 28)

Back cover/jacket (clockwise from top left): G. Berni, *Sparklet Nasal, guérit radicalement les rhumes de cerveau (Sparklet Nasal, Completely Cures Head Colds)*, c. 1900–1905 (cat. 17); *Ayer's Cherry Pectoral, Cures Coughs & Colds*, c. 1900 (cat. 15); Emilio Vilá, *Achetez le timbre antituberculeux (Buy the Anti-Tuberculosis Stamp)*, c. 1928 (cat. 35); Leonetto Cappiello, *Uricure: Rheumatismo, Artritis, Gota & Arenillas (Uricure: Rheumatism, Arthritis, Gout & Kidney Stones)*, c. 1910–11 (cat. 29)

Half-title page: Jacques and Pierre Bellenger, *Pharmacie Canonne, la pharmacie des gens économes (Pharmacie Canonne, the Pharmacy of Thrifty People)*, 1944 (detail, cat. 51)

Frontispiece: William H. Helfand with some of the posters he has given to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, November 2010

#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Philadelphia Museum of Art.  
Health for sale : posters from the William H. Helfand collection : an interview with William H. Helfand / by Innis Howe Shoemaker ; catalogue by William H. Helfand and John Ittmann.  
p. cm.

Published on the occasion of an exhibition held at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Apr. 2–July 31, 2011.

ISBN 978-0-87633-231-3 (PMA paper)

ISBN 978-0-300-17117-4 (Yale paper)

1. Medicine—Posters—Exhibitions. 2. Drugs—Posters—Exhibitions. 3. Helfand, William H.—Poster collections—Exhibitions. 4. Posters—Pennsylvania—Philadelphia—Exhibitions. 5. Philadelphia Museum of Art—Exhibitions. I. Shoemaker, Innis H. II. Helfand, William H. III. Ittmann, John W. IV. Title. V. Title: Posters from the William H. Helfand collection.

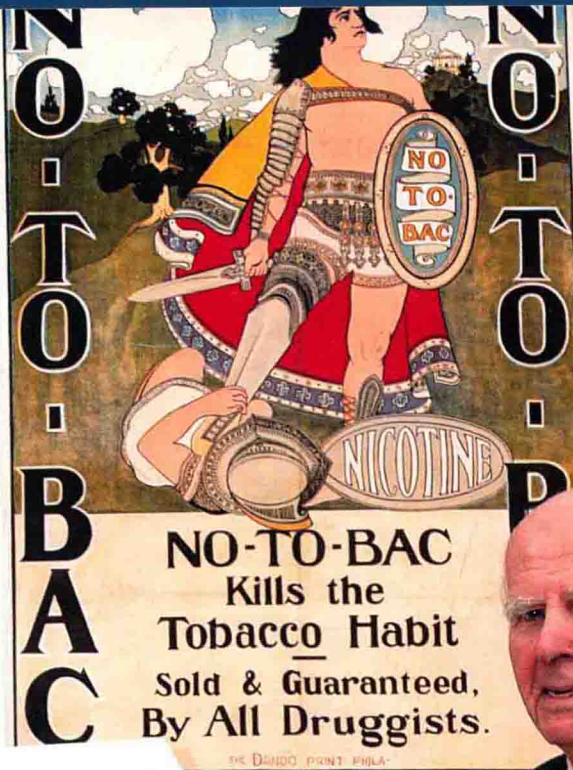
NC1849.M43P48 2011

741.6'7407474811—dc22

2010053142



**HEALTH FOR SALE**



# HEALTH FOR SALE

POSTERS FROM THE  
WILLIAM H. HELFAND COLLECTION

Interview with William H. Helfand  
by Innis Howe Shoemaker

Catalogue by William H. Helfand and John Ittmann

PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART  
in association with  
YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
New Haven and London



Published on the occasion of the exhibition *Health for Sale: Posters from the William H. Helfand Collection*, Philadelphia Museum of Art, April 2–July 31, 2011

This publication was supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Fund for Scholarly Publications at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

*Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin*, n.s., no. 3

The *Bulletin* is an occasional publication of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Produced by the Publishing Department  
Philadelphia Museum of Art  
Sherry Babbitt, The William T. Ranney Director of Publishing  
2525 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19130 USA  
www.philamuseum.org

Published by the Philadelphia Museum of Art  
in association with  
Yale University Press  
P.O. Box 209040  
302 Temple Street  
New Haven, CT 06520-9040  
www.yalebooks.com/art

Edited by Kathleen Krattenmaker  
Production by Richard Bonk  
Photography by Amanda Jaffe and Jason Wierzbicki  
Designed by Andrea Hemmann, GHI Design, Philadelphia  
Printed and bound in Canada by Transcontinental Litho Acme, Montreal

Text and compilation © 2011 Philadelphia Museum of Art

Works by Paul Davis © Paul Davis

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any other information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

All illustrated works are in the collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art unless otherwise noted.

Front cover/jacket (clockwise from top left): Franz von Stuck, *Internationale Hygiene-Ausstellung Dresden (International Hygiene Exhibition Dresden)*, 1911 (cat. 25); Jules Chéret, *Vin Mariani, Popular French Tonic Wine*, 1894 (cat. 10); *Compagnie Fermière des Eaux de l'Ours, Puy-de-Dôme*, c. 1874 (cat. 6); Leonetto Cappiello, *Docteur Rasurel, "Sous vêtements hygiéniques" (Doctor Rasurel, "Hygienic Undergarments")*, c. 1911 (cat. 28)

Back cover/jacket (clockwise from top left): G. Berni, *Sparklet Nasal, guérit radicalement les rhumes de cerveau (Sparklet Nasal, Completely Cures Head Colds)*, c. 1900–1905 (cat. 17); *Ayer's Cherry Pectoral, Cures Coughs & Colds*, c. 1900 (cat. 15); Emilio Vilá, *Achetez le timbre antituberculeux (Buy the Anti-Tuberculosis Stamp)*, c. 1928 (cat. 35); Leonetto Cappiello, *Uricure: Rheumatismo, Artritis, Gota & Arenillas (Uricure: Rheumatism, Arthritis, Gout & Kidney Stones)*, c. 1910–11 (cat. 29)

Half-title page: Jacques and Pierre Bellenger, *Pharmacie Canonne, la pharmacie des gens économes (Pharmacie Canonne, the Pharmacy of Thrifty People)*, 1944 (detail, cat. 51)

Frontispiece: William H. Helfand with some of the posters he has given to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, November 2010

#### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Philadelphia Museum of Art.  
Health for sale : posters from the William H. Helfand collection : an interview with William H. Helfand / by Innis Howe Shoemaker ; catalogue by William H. Helfand and John Ittmann.  
p. cm.

Published on the occasion of an exhibition held at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Apr. 2–July 31, 2011.

ISBN 978-0-87633-231-3 (PMA paper)

ISBN 978-0-300-17117-4 (Yale paper)

1. Medicine—Posters—Exhibitions. 2. Drugs—Posters—Exhibitions. 3. Helfand, William H.—Poster collections—Exhibitions. 4. Posters—Pennsylvania—Philadelphia—Exhibitions. 5. Philadelphia Museum of Art—Exhibitions. I. Shoemaker, Innis H. II. Helfand, William H. III. Ittmann, John W. IV. Title. V. Title: Posters from the William H. Helfand collection.

NC1849.M43P48 2011

741.6'7407474811—dc22

2010053142

## FOREWORD

---

**T**he Ars Medica Collection of the Philadelphia Museum of Art—comprised of prints, drawings, photographs, posters, illustrated books, and ephemera devoted to a broad range of medical topics—was launched in 1949 by Carl Zigrosser, the Museum's first curator of prints and drawings, with support from the Philadelphia-based pharmaceutical company Smith Kline and French Laboratories. After more than a half-century of steady growth it now includes some 3,000 works of art on paper and is the only collection of its type housed in a major art museum. Smith Kline and French (now GlaxoSmithKline) continued to support the collection's growth for four decades, fostered by the energies of a succession of curators in the Museum's Department of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs. Since 1967, however, a truly significant force in the development of the Ars Medica Collection has been William H. Helfand, who has not only enriched the collection with a steady stream of gifts that now number more than 1,600 works from his prodigious holdings of medical prints, posters, and ephemera, but also contributed his enthusiasm and deep knowledge of the field through the many engaging and erudite texts he has written for a sequence of brochures and catalogues for exhibitions at the Museum and elsewhere.

Since he acquired his first medical print in the mid-1950s Bill Helfand has amassed a collection that now—despite his many generous donations to the Museum and other institutions—comprises more than 7,500 works with subjects related to medicine and pharmacy. He began by collecting prints and in the mid-1960s added related materials such as trade cards, labels, bookplates, and sheet music. Then around 1969 Bill bought his first medical poster while living with his wife, Audrey, and two daughters in Paris during his tenure as president of the French subsidiary of Merck & Co. Gradually, and despite the storage issues imposed by their relatively large size, he vigorously continued to add more posters, with the happy result that he eventually offered the pick of this part of his collection to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, resulting over the years in the formation of a spectacular group of nearly 200 medical posters in the Ars Medica Collection.

Bold in message and often grand in scale, medical posters colorfully proclaim miracle cures and tonics, admonitions and threats about deadly diseases, and advertisements for pharmacies and medical conferences. Messages are not always

communicated directly. In fact, humor, satire, and caricature at times soften or leaven unpleasant subjects. In other instances, no detail is spared in graphically conveying potential risk or danger. A wide variety of ingenious combinations of typography and imagery provide successful means for getting a message across, from the elaborate decorative borders and narrative scenes that appear in some of the earliest posters (cats. 1–5) to the more streamlined, simplified designs seen, for example, in Jean José's Art Deco poster advertising a pharmacy (cat. 50) or in the striking graphic boldness of a relatively recent poster by Paul Davis promoting an AIDS benefit (cat. 53).

In addition to serving as the record of an exhibition of posters from the Helfand collection, this publication is intended as a salute to Bill for his devotion to promoting and developing the Ars Medica Collection, and for his service since 1967 on the Advisory Committee of the Museum's Prints, Drawings, and Photographs Department. His commitment to the department was expressed with extraordinary generosity in his endowment of the position of the Audrey and William H. Helfand Senior Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs in 1997.

It should come as no surprise that Bill himself—the unrivaled expert in the field!—is one of the authors of this publication. He was aided in his efforts by John Ittmann, the Museum's Kathy and Ted Fernberger Curator of Prints, who unearthed a great deal of new information about the artists, dates, and printers of the posters. We are delighted that Bill graciously agreed to be interviewed about the formation of his collection of medical prints and posters and his long association with the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The resulting lively contribution to this catalogue, which was supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Fund for Scholarly Publications, presents a picture of an ideal combination of passionate collector, inquisitive scholar, and generous donor whose commitment continues to flourish and serves as a model for others.

TIMOTHY RUB

*The George D. Widener Director and Chief Executive Officer*

INNIS HOWE SHOEMAKER

*The Audrey and William H. Helfand Senior Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs*



**WIN CRIBIER**

**GRANDE  
PHARMACIE CENTRALE**

**A. CRIBIER**

19, RUE DE LA RÉPUBLIQUE, 19.

**PASTILLES CRIBIER**

**PRODUITS  
DU  
PHAR  
CENTRAL**

**PRODUITS LES MEILLEURS  
PRIX LES PLUS BAS**





**IHS** Bill, you've been associated with the Museum for many years and much longer than I have, and you've been on our Prints, Drawings, and Photographs Committee since its beginning in 1967. I'd love to know, how did you begin collecting?

**WHH** I began collecting as a result of a course I took at the Barnes Foundation when I was in my final year at the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy [now the University of the Sciences]; I had previously received a degree in chemical engineering from the University of Pennsylvania. The Barnes accepted me as a student primarily because I knew nothing about art at the time, and I wanted to make up for my complete lack of understanding. The course was intended to enable the students to understand and appreciate art, and it was held every Tuesday and most Fridays in front of the paintings and decorative arts at the foundation in Merion. I had a scheduled class in bacteriology on the Tuesdays, but I preferred going to the Barnes, so I never actually attended a single session of that course—which I nonetheless passed through the kindness of a friend who gave me his notes to study. Violette de Mazia was my professor for the Barnes class. It was she who wrote most of the foundation's publications with Dr. Barnes.

**IHS** How old were you then?

**WHH** This was in 1951. I would have been twenty-five, single, finishing my education. The Barnes experience made me want to become an art collector myself, but of course I couldn't afford any significant paintings, so I began to collect prints. My initial acquisitions came exclusively from the Print Club on Latimer Street in Philadelphia. Bertha von Moschizker was the director, and she was most encouraging. She sold me the first prints I acquired. They were primarily by Piranesi and Renoir, and there was even a Manet. I didn't pay much for them. Then one day in 1955 or 1956, after I had begun

working for the pharmaceutical company Merck, I noticed an etching in a catalogue from Elkin Mathews, the British book dealer. It was a 1772 caricature of a military pharmacist, and it was called *The Chymical Macaroni* (fig. 1). I bought it for five pounds, and I liked it very much, so I began to ask myself if there might be any more prints dealing with medical, pharmaceutical, and related subjects. I've been looking ever since, and after more than fifty years I still am able to find objects I never knew existed.

**IHS** Did you immediately start buying more after you got that first print?

**WHH** After I reflected upon it and asked the dealer if there were other similar prints, I did begin to buy more. I remember visiting

Walter Schatzki, the antiquarian bookseller in New York, who had been recommended to me. I bought many of my early prints from him. I recently tried to find out exactly when I bought that first print from Elkin Mathews, so I spent some time looking through early catalogues of the firm in the Grolier Club's collection of bookseller catalogues, but I could not find that print; there were too many objects listed in the catalogues, all at prices that today seem most reasonable. I even looked at the checks I had written then, but although I couldn't find the check for that print, I did find checks written to Walter Schatzki. These would have been written sometime afterward, indicating that I purchased *The Chymical Macaroni* in 1955 or 1956. I still have this print. It has turned out to be very rare. I've never seen another copy anywhere, except in the British Museum.



LEFT: DETAIL OF GRANDE PHARMACIE CENTRALE, A. CRIBIER, C. 1905 (CAT. 23)

FIG. 1. GARNETT TERRY (BRITISH 1746?–1817). *THE CHYMICAL MACARONI, CAPT. LUDGATE*, 1772. ETCHING, 7 3/4 X 5 INCHES (19.7 X 12.8 CM). COLLECTION OF WILLIAM H. HELFAND

**IHS** *Is that right? So I guess soon afterward you must have been hooked, as a collector?*

**WHH** Well, I found so many wonderful things. I don't remember specifically what I bought from Walter Schatzki, but shortly after that, in view of the interest I had, I acquired the names of two collectors of medical prints and wrote to them asking for information on possible sources. One was in Paris, Maurice Bouvet, who wrote back a letter that I still have saying that I was thirty years too late. He had accumulated a wonderful collection of prints about pharmacy and medicine—almost all French—that is now a public collection in Paris [the Ordre National des Pharmaciens on avenue Ruysdaël]. I have looked at the prints in the Bouvet collection frequently. Another print collector to whom I wrote was the Canadian pediatrician Theodore Drake. His wife wrote back saying that Drake had just died, but she referred me to an article he had written about his prints that was published in the *Journal of the History of Medicine*, which I read. She also kindly gave me the names of a few dealers that he had frequented, one of whom was the British dealer Walter T. Spencer. Schatzki and Spencer were the first people who helped me build my collection. Then later I learned—I was living in Philadelphia at the time—that the Philadelphia Museum of Art was assembling a collection of medical prints, which was a total surprise. I made an appointment to see the head of the Department of Prints and Drawings, who was then Ding [Kneeland] McNulty, and I told him what I was doing. We eventually became very good friends and did what we could to continue supporting the collection, and I've been involved with the Museum's Ars Medica Collection ever since.

**IHS** *I was reading some early correspondence yesterday, and it sounds as though you and he were working together to form an Ars Medica center at the Museum. I'd love to hear about that.*

**WHH** Well, I knew that the Ars Medica Collection had been begun by [the former head of the Department of Prints and Drawings] Carl Zigrosser, I think in the late 1940s.

**IHS** 1949.

**WHH** And this would have been 1956 or 1957—sometime in the mid-1950s. These were the early years of my collecting. Ding and I decided that if we could raise more money in addition to the initial gift that had been given by [the pharmaceutical company] Smith Kline and French to purchase Ars Medica prints, that that would be great. So he and I made an appointment with their public affairs department—they were on Spring Garden Street in Philadelphia—and had a meeting with the department's manager. We received another donation, which we used to buy additional prints, so the overture to Smith Kline proved successful. I think we went back again, but it was not to be a permanent source of funding. Then some years afterward, Smith Kline and French was acquired by Glaxo, and they shifted their interest to other matters. It was in the late 1960s, after the Museum had formed the Advisory Committee for the Department of Prints and Drawings, that I was asked to join that committee. Lessing Rosenwald was the chairman at the time.

**IHS** *How did you educate yourself as a print collector? Was it through trial and error?*

**WHH** Early in my career as a print collector, when I knew

precious little, my wife Audrey and I were invited to a dinner party at the home of the printmaker Jerry Kaplan and his wife, Anne. I met his colleague Benton Spruance there and told him that I had begun to collect prints. He invited me, whenever I had the time, to come to a class on the history of prints and their appreciation that he was giving to women students at Rosemont College. The course was held at Alverthorpe, Lessing Rosenwald's home and gallery, which housed his collection of prints and illustrated books and was not far from Rosemont. Thereafter, whenever I could, I told my secretary that I had an important meeting to attend and would not be back for the rest of the afternoon, and I would go to the sessions at Alverthorpe. This experience must have been in the early 1960s, when my office was in Montgomery County, near Lansdale, Pennsylvania. It was one of the more memorable moments in my life as a print collector.

**IHS** *When you joined the Print Committee in 1967 you already had more than four hundred prints in your collection, according to the record.*

**WHH** I now have 7,500 prints in the collection. But I confess that a lot of them are not too significant. Some are more illustrations than they are prints. But I had four hundred then? That's interesting. So this would have been after I began in the 1950s. Of course, the early ones were the easy ones to find.

**IHS** *It sounds as though you may actually have had more than four hundred, counting ephemera.*

**WHH** In the beginning I did not have much ephemera. I had some, but my interest in it grew later on. So that total would not have included ephemera. The ephemera I've had over the years have included many postcards and related small objects that, if counted, would make the collection much larger but would not indicate anything that significant. I've never even catalogued most of the ephemera. I catalogued some of the more important objects, but not the majority.

**IHS** *When did you begin to veer toward popular prints?*

**WHH** I suppose when I first saw them in the print shops. Walter Schatzki may have had some, but I never found much of the *imagerie populaire* you're speaking about until I began to go to France and then lived in Paris, after which it was much easier to find them.

**IHS** *By "popular," I also meant the posters and the advertising.*

**WHH** The advertising was part of the ephemera. I'd say it must have been by the mid-1960s that I started collecting ephemera, after I had begun with the prints. The posters did not really begin until late 1969. I had joined the international division of Merck one year before and later was sent to France to be the president of Merck's subsidiary there. On my first visit to take up my new position, in late 1969, I bought my first pharmaceutical poster. I had acquired a few posters about World War II before that.

**IHS** *Nonmedical?*

**WHH** They had nothing to do with medicine. The first medical one would have been purchased in 1969 from a poster gallery, the Galerie Documents, on the rue de Seine in Paris. It was *Sirope Vincent*, by Jules Chéret, and I still have it hanging



in the living room of my apartment (fig. 2). By being in France I was able to find many more posters than I would have been able to find in the United States at the time. I think this was the reason I started collecting them. I saw a new category that was meaningful to me. These were large, colorful, and, to me, exciting images.

**IHS** *Did you worry about the scale?*

**WHH** I worried about what I was going to do with them. But of course collectors don't really ask, "Where am I going to put this?" or "Is there any room for it?" I remember bringing the first one home, and my wife said to me, "Well, that's great. We can hang it." And we did hang it, so it was not a question of where to store it. But later, when I began to acquire more posters, I really had no room, and I had to store them rolled up. I remember that after an exhibition of more than sixty of my medical posters in Albany, New York, I gave most of the works in the show to the Museum. Giving them to the Museum made storage your problem, not mine, and that was good for me. But later on there was always a problem about where to store these rather large posters—in a small apartment.

**IHS** *That was the first thought I had—if you have this many posters, what are you going to do with them in a small space?*

**WHH** Well, when I got the first poster we had a home in Princeton, New Jersey, so we had more space than in an apartment. I did not buy any more posters until we moved to France in early 1970. The whole family moved, and we lived there for four and a half years. I remember writing my first article about the posters in a French journal, the *Revue d'histoire de la pharmacie*, and giving my first talk about the posters to a French audience. The projectionist at the talk I gave was somewhat astounded by the objects I showed. He was the son of Louis Cotinat, who was a major collector of ceramics. The son soon began to buy posters, and within two or three months he had acquired more posters than I had because his father knew all the places to go. His father would send him to the Hôtel Drouot in Paris to see what was coming up for sale in ceramics, and while there he would look at the posters. In other words, he had nothing else to do—he wasn't working—except buy posters, and he quickly surpassed me.

**IHS** *Did they let you in on any of their sources?*

**WHH** I never asked. I had good friends in Paris, many of whom were collectors. They were the first French friends that Audrey and I made there, and one of them, Pierre Julien, became a very close colleague. He had a medical-print collection that I eventually acquired a few years ago, after his death. I never asked him for sources. I always felt that was a no-no subject. But there's one anecdote: I spent at least one day with Pierre Julien every year for the thirty-some years we knew each other, and one day, about five or six years ago, I asked him if he had any ex-votos [votive offerings]. I had begun to look at ex-votos, objects that were made mostly in Europe and Latin America. Pierre smiled and showed me some: there were two on a wall of his library and a lot of smaller ones in a drawer. I asked him, "Well, where did you find these?" I said, "I'm not asking what specific place, but was it a gallery, was it a bookstore, was it through the mail, where was it?" He smiled again and said that he and his



FIG. 2. JULES CHÉRET (FRENCH, 1836–1932). *SIROP VINCENT* (VINCENT SYRUP), 1893. COLOR LITHOGRAPH, 46 7/8 X 33 7/8 INCHES (119 X 86 CM). COLLECTION OF WILLIAM H. HELFAND

daughter had been to Spain, where they found them next to a trashcan in a church and took them. Well, this was little help for me. But that's the only time I even came close to asking where, so I never learned their sources. And of course they knew places I didn't know, although I found enough sources for prints in Paris, in both shops and flea markets.

**IHS** *Did you have any favorite places where you found things in Paris?*

**WHH** The rue de Seine. When I lived in Paris, there were print dealers all around the rue de Seine. The poster gallery was there. Paul Prouté was there. At the time there were two different Proutés with shops. There were a couple of *experts* who were the specialists at the Hôtel Drouot print sales. Other than Prouté, from whom I bought a number of prints, I don't remember any specific places, but there was another shop from which I bought many prints. The woman who managed it later moved near the Hôtel Drouot, where I still see her.

**IHS** *Were the French dealers different from the American dealers?*

**WHH** When I began to buy prints they all had to have some medical connection for me. This was the focal point, and if I'd say to Walter Schatzki, "Let me see what you have that's medical," he could bring out things for me to see. The French had several dealers who organized their objects by theme or subject, and some still do. American print dealers



do not arrange their holdings that way. They have their prints organized by artist and period—American versus European—so that it's relatively simple to find the work of a specific printmaker. But if I say I'm interested in a certain theme, they might remember, but normally they don't know. Daumier prints with medical interest will be with other Daumier prints, not organized by theme.

**IHS** *Recently I read that early American posters were made by commercial companies and that there was not much interest in the artists who made them—as, say, there was in France.*

**WHH** That's right.

**IHS** *So that would make finding what you want even harder, I would think.*

**WHH** It does. The poster dealers are better able to deal with this issue than the print dealers, frankly. They might not categorize by subject, but if you go to a poster dealer, or to a poster fair—and both New York and San Francisco have them—and ask for medical subjects, they usually remember what they have. But of course there are many objects that a serious searcher would consider to be in that field that they would not.

**IHS** *Yes.*

**WHH** That's always a problem. For example, right now I'm working on a paper that has to do with the presence in some prints depicting pharmacies and alchemists' laboratories of a stuffed animal hanging from the ceiling. It's not a very important aspect of the prints, but I find I have a number of examples showing these animals (see cat. 5). I recently visited the Chemical Heritage Foundation in Philadelphia to look at their prints, and the librarian had very kindly pulled out and made photocopies of the prints and paintings that she saw had these animals in them. Then later we went to look at an exhibition at the foundation, which included a caricature from *Puck*, the American magazine, called *The Alchemist of the Past, and The Alchemist of the Present* [1884] by Friedrich Graetz, and it had one of these stuffed animals, but she hadn't noticed it. So if I ask a curator whether he or she has objects with some odd feature that I'm interested in, I might get an accurate answer, but I might not. I would always be afraid some works would be missed, as was the case at the Chemical Heritage Foundation. Similarly, if I go to a print dealer and say, "I'm interested in this subject—what do you have?" the answer might be "We have nothing now," but I'll look through his prints and find something. This invariably happens.

**IHS** *So you really have to do the searching yourself.*

**WHH** Yes. A year ago at a book fair—lately I've found prints from dealers at antiquarian book fairs—a Dutch dealer from Utrecht from whom I had previously bought some objects said, "I have nothing." I said, "Let me look through your popular prints," and I found a very early Dutch example of *imagerie populaire* that she hadn't thought of. So it happens.

**IHS** *To go back a bit—is it standard with collectors that you don't reveal your sources, or is this just something that you yourself have been careful about?*

**WHH** It depends, and the French are more circumspect than we might be. A cardiologist at the Mayo Clinic, Bruce Fye, a

good friend who began collecting medical prints in addition to books a few years ago, is someone with whom I've had many conversations about our common interest. Recently he mounted an interesting exhibition of his medical prints at the Rochester Art Center in Minnesota, and about two-thirds of what he showed were prints I had in my collection. However, I would never ask him where he found his prints, and he would never ask me where I got mine. But it depends. If I met a budding collector I would probably tell him a few places that might be good sources. Though if I had a secret source somewhere, I wouldn't reveal it to anybody.

**IHS** *Of course.*

**WHH** But I don't have any secret source, unfortunately, not anymore.

**IHS** *Did you buy things as you traveled around or mostly when you were living in different cities?*

**WHH** A major way of finding objects was when I traveled. I was employed in the international division of Merck for sixteen years, and there was a lot of international travel involved. Whenever I would go somewhere I would try to find at least one day for myself. It wasn't always possible, but if it was, I would go to see the dealers, or go to places where there might be prints available, or go to see exhibitions, and I would find prints or posters.

**IHS** *Did you ever find anything in some odd place?*

**WHH** Oh, sure. In some place I didn't know existed? Yes. This is true more of ephemera than it is of prints. For example, there are patron saints in different medical fields, and the patron saints of pharmacy and medicine are Cosmas and Damian. One day in Rio de Janeiro, in late September, I was taking a walk along a street with a group of shops that had set up tables outside and stocked them with sale merchandise. On one of them I noticed paper cups and paper plates with images of two saints on them. It seemed odd to see two saints, so I asked in my immature Spanish who they might be. The shopkeeper said they were Cosmas and Damian, so I bought everything he had that included portraits of these saints. Later, in Sao Paulo, where Merck's offices were, I asked the managing director of the Brazilian company why the saints were there, and he told me that in Brazil these saints were the patron saints of children, not medicine, and that Bahia was the key place that celebrated their birthday, which was September 27, just a few days before I had discovered the cups and plates. In other words, the shopkeeper had tried to sell these items on the saints' natal day, but he couldn't do it, so they were a bargain when I bought them. I then said to the director, "Next year on their birthday I want you to ask your sales representative in Bahia to find every inexpensive item he or she can that celebrates them—and to buy two of each. Put them in boxes, and mail them to me. I'll pay you for everything." He did this, and I then gave one of the boxes of flashlights, memo pads, and similar trinkets to Pierre Julien, my friend in Paris. These saints were Pierre's major passion—he had written a book about them—and he later published a paper about the Cosmas and Damian trinkets.

**IHS** *That's great.*

**WHH** That sort of experience happened many times—you



walk in strange places and you find strange things. Bookshops were always good for something.

**IHS** *You've done a lot of lecturing and publishing on this kind of material. When did you start to do that?*

**WHH** Probably it was in the early 1960s. I first published a few articles about prints devoted to specific individuals or by specific artists in the *Journal of the American Pharmaceutical Association*. One article was on the prints of James Gillray, the British caricaturist; another was on Louis-Désiré Véron, the owner of a rival journal [*Le Constitutionnel*] frequently caricatured by Daumier [in *La Caricature* and *Le Charivari*]. That was the beginning, and since then I've published several books and many articles. I discovered publications on the history of medicine whose editors had an interest in visual material. I also gave talks to groups and published many of the subjects of these lectures. I'm still trying to do that—working on papers that I hope to be able to publish. Academics in the history of medicine have been very accommodating, because in the main they are people who have little interest in visual objects themselves, and so they welcome those who do. There have always been a few collectors in this group, but there is often novelty for many of them in seeing visual objects that relate to medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, or nursing.

**IHS** *And where are these people?*

**WHH** They're all over the country. They're all over world.

**IHS** *What kind of business are they in?*

**WHH** They're academics, they're professors, they're writers. Rarely are they in the commercial world, as I was. But several of them have become good friends and associates and good contacts for me and have invited me to give talks to their societies on the history of medicine. It's been very, very worthwhile for me. Being a print collector has opened many avenues that I had never anticipated.

**IHS** *There's been a definite connection between your work in marketing and advertising and the kind of art you collect, don't you think?*

**WHH** Yes, there's been a connection for me, but—and there is a but—I would never use this material in our advertising at Merck. For a long time at Merck, international marketing and advertising reported to me, and even when I was working with the domestic market, I was responsible for the marketing of new products. I would always talk about my prints and posters with other people in the company, or with advertising agencies, and they would ask me about my collection, but I never wanted to use anything of mine in the advertising because what I had was from the past, and I wanted to project an image of what the company was selling as products to be taken today and tomorrow. There was, to me, a break between the two.

**IHS** *Yes, I can see that.*

**WHH** I didn't mind doing exhibitions, though.

**IHS** *I was thinking of the connection more conceptually—of the idea of selling something.*

**WHH** Well, one of the reasons I got into the world of prints is that I was involved in the marketing and selling of drugs, and I've always had a feeling in my heart that the people in

the past who did this were my figurative ancestors, if you will. This led to a great interest in the selling of medicine—and in quacks and quackery. One of the exhibitions we had here at the Museum, which was preceded by one at the Grolier Club, was on images of quacks and quackery and the literature about them. These men and women, even though they were not professionally trained, were interested in marketing and selling their brands, and they would at times concoct wild stories about them, almost always not true. But these were the people who preceded me and the work I was doing. I tried to be totally honest in my approach—more than they were. The company wouldn't have permitted me to be otherwise.

**IHS** *Of course.*

**WHH** Nonetheless, the things they did in the past had some relationship to what we were doing.

**IHS** *How did your family feel about your collecting? I know your daughter Jessica is also collecting printed material now. How much were they involved while you were doing this?*

**WHH** Well, my wife was very supportive. These objects began to encroach on space in the house where we lived, but she was almost always supportive. Although there was a moment, I recall, when I was buying a few prints and she asked me when I would have enough—when there would be enough. I answered her by saying, "That's a word we never use!" But my two daughters inherited the collecting gene. Rachel, who lives in London, collects cookbooks, whereas Jessica, who is a graphic designer, collects a variety of things that have some relation to ephemera. Along with her husband and other people, she writes a blog on graphic design, [designobserver.com](http://designobserver.com), and a few months ago I saw that one of her articles was about a poster, which she illustrated in the blog (see cat. 45). It was a French public-health poster about the dangers of venereal disease, by the artist Theodoro. It shows a couple kissing in front of a large skull and contains a warning—be very careful, venereal disease is all around, temptation is all around—and this skull is laughing. So Jessica wrote an article saying, "When I was a child growing up, this poster was on the wall, and it scared the hell out of me." But I hung the poster because I liked the artistic presentation of the image, not realizing that it would scare the hell out of an eight-year-old child.

**IHS** *To go back to your relationship with the Museum—I noticed in the records that you really started giving prints in 1967 when you joined the Print Committee, and that you gave things just about every single year in the 1970s. Then in 1986 you basically made a commitment to allow the Museum to select whatever we wanted from your collection, and there was a very large gift in 1988–89 that preceded the Picture of Health exhibition that you did here. I was wondering—how did you come to the conclusion that you would like to give a large portion of this collection away while you were still actively collecting?*

**WHH** I've always known that I can't take the collection with me, and this is a continuing thought process that I go through, regarding what I'm going to do with it. My friend Pierre Julien, who was also a collector of medical prints, not surprisingly had many of the very same objects that I do. Over the last ten years of his life, I would ask him every year what he intended to do with the collection, but he never



resolved the issue. The consequence was that when he died his five children had to make the decision. Ultimately, I bought the collection because no one else would have anything to do with it. This shows the difficulty of not deciding for yourself, when you're the one who knows most about what it is you have. I knew the Philadelphia Museum of Art had a collection of medical prints, and I also knew that the Museum was not pursuing every kind of thematic collection, but that medicine was a good subject for Philadelphia because of the Museum's historical concerns about medical and related topics. And Ding was very welcoming in the beginning, as you and the staff have been ever since. At first my donations were of duplicates that I would acquire, but there was one year when I needed more space, so I took the contents of one of my Solander boxes and let the Museum pick what they wanted. Then, after we came back from living in Europe, and after you had taken over as head of the department, we had a meeting at the Museum.

**IHS** *That was in 1986.*

**WHH** Audrey and I came to the meeting because you and Ellen Jacobowitz [the print curator] had indicated some interest in exhibiting work from my collection. Anne d'Harnoncourt [the museum director] was also at the meeting. And I said, "I want to do a poster exhibition at the Philadelphia Museum of Art." I remember that after the discussion Anne spoke up and said, "Well, why just the posters? Why don't we include other things you have as well?"—because at that time I had not given many posters to the Museum; I had given more prints. The subsequent decision was that Ellen would come to New York to look at what I had—I was living on Fifth Avenue at the time. She made six or eight visits and chose items from the collection that should be in the exhibition. She cherry-picked the better objects.

**IHS** *That was the group you gave to us in 1988–89.*

**WHH** Yes, and then the exhibition itself ultimately was in 1991. After that, I gave the Museum all of what was selected for the exhibition, except for five or six objects.

**IHS** *Yes, and you continued to give more almost every year after that.*

**WHH** After each of the subsequent exhibitions that I did with John Ittmann [the print curator after Ellen Jacobowitz]—about pharmacy, nursing, and dentistry, and the quacks and quackery exhibition as well—I've left most of the objects at the Museum as donations. The French collection of Pierre Julien that I recently bought and have amalgamated with mine resulted in lots of duplicates, none of which I have given to the Museum, except for those dealing with religious subjects. There were several large Épinal-like examples of *imagerie populaire* in the Julien collection, of saints and the deaths of both good and bad men, in extremely fresh condition, which I felt the Museum ought to have. But in general, if there were copies of a work in both Pierre's and my collection, I would keep the better copy, and the rest would go in a duplicate file. My friend Pierre collected a lot of duplicates. I don't know why. I never wanted to have duplicates for space reasons, and I set up a database to prevent me from doing that. Though my database is not 100 percent complete, it's usually accurate, and it has regularly prevented me from adding duplicate copies. But for some reason Pierre collected a lot of duplicates.

For some prints he had five or six copies, so I ended up with large piles of duplicates. I've given them all away to other institutions, except maybe forty or fifty, feeling that if the Museum's going to get the residual part of the collection, why not let them get the better pieces. So you didn't get much of that material.

**IHS** *Well, John Ittmann and I have very much enjoyed doing the exhibitions on specific subjects with you. When John came to work at the Museum [in 1990], I said to him, "You know, this Helfand collection is so enormous, and there's a great deal that we want. How can we get a handle on it?" And we finally came up with the idea of having exhibitions on specific subjects such as dentistry, pharmacy, and nursing. We thought this would be a very good way of becoming familiar with these different areas, and then you very generously would give us a good part of that material.*

**WHH** Well, there are many other areas to cover. We could do lots of exhibitions. But, frankly, they're a lot of work, and I've gotten older and in recent years have been quite busy doing other things.

**IHS** *What can you tell me about the market for this kind of material now?*

**WHH** Like everything else, it's changed. Things have become rarer and more difficult to find, but it's also the fact that I now have a large collection. If I come across a print or a poster that I have not seen before, that is germane to the collection, I know it's rare, and normally I would want to have it and would probably acquire it no matter what its cost. But the problem with a collector who has been at it for more than fifty years, as I have, is that if I see something that once was \$50 and now is \$5,000, I have to balk a little bit. But this has happened in almost every field: as new collectors have come along, the supply of what is available has been reduced, and there has been a general inflation in prices all over the world. In looking through the Elkin Mathews catalogues for the first print I bought in the mid-1950s, the prices of all the items listed seem absurdly low now, of course, but finances were different then. So there's been an escalation, and fortunately for me I have most of the easier-to-find things, which did not have a great cost attached to them. But whereas in the beginning there were lots of them, there are very few now. I remember at Walter T. Spencer in London, one of the main sources for me in the beginning of my collecting, there was a lovely woman, Lydia Watkins, who sold me the prints—mostly caricatures, mostly British, but other things too. She'd bring a pile of prints to the table, maybe fifteen inches high, unmatted, and she'd say, "Go through this pile, pick what you think you might want, put them aside, and I'll price them later." I would happily go through the pile, and she would then take the prints I had segregated and put them into smaller stacks: "This is one pound, this is two pounds, this is five, this is ten, this is twenty." And if I felt ten pounds was too much for something, I wouldn't buy it. But every time I'd go back there—I was living in Europe in the final days of the business, and I went to London several times a year—I'd buy some prints. As the years went by the pile got smaller and smaller, until at the end there was almost nothing left. In other words, they were not replenishing their stock, so what had been available at first stopped being available maybe seven or eight years after I started collecting and is not available anymore.



**IHS** So now would you say to a new collector what the French collector said to you early on?

**WHH** You're thirty years too late? No, because I feel that a collector will always find new avenues that are still available because he or she has an impulse to find things. This is true of all the collectors I know. A woman I know in Massachusetts who is a major collector of books about things women do finds things all the time—books, prints, manuscripts, ephemera. People can do that.

**IHS** Is there anything you're still looking for?

**WHH** Oh, sure.

**IHS** Or are you loathe to divulge that?

**WHH** There are always things I'm still looking for. There is a print dealer in York, England, who now offers his caricatures online. But twenty years ago he would issue a catalogue once a year that contained every caricature he wanted to sell. He would then send out a letter saying, for example, "On April the third, at ten o'clock in the morning, I will answer the phone, I will read the mail, I will look at faxes, and I will then apportion who gets what." On one occasion, he had a print that I desperately wanted, a print called *The Quacks* [1783, anonymous], showing two important eighteenth-century quacks [Gustavus Katterfelto and James Graham] as antagonists. It was a lovely print, and I wanted it in every way. I asked for it, but I didn't get it because of his phone auction and the strange way he had of selling his prints, and I've been looking for it ever since. It has eluded me.

**IHS** How about buying online? Have you done much of that?

**WHH** I have bought online—I bought on eBay, and I have bought from dealers online. I have generally come out very well with eBay. Once in a while the item is not what it was reported to be, but in any case it didn't cost that much. I found some wonderful objects on eBay. There is a print called *Der Arzt* [*The Doctor*] by a German artist, Ivo Saliger, who later became a favorite of Adolf Hitler (fig. 3). In the 1920s he did an etching of a physician and Death fighting over the body of a beautiful nude woman, the metaphor being that either the physician will save her or Death will claim her—what will happen? It's an etching that many doctors get very excited by because it shows the heroic physician that they like to believe they are. I found a good example on eBay, and it's since become rare. I know people who've seen it, doctors who've seen it—who come to my apartment where it's hanging and ask, "Can you find one of these for me?" And I can't. I look all the time on German eBay to see if it's there, or at German dealers' stock. I can't find it. I don't know if you have it in the Museum or not.

**IHS** I don't know. It's interesting, though—do you find yourself tempted to look on eBay all the time?

**WHH** No, I don't look all the time. I look very rarely, because it's very difficult. If I look for prints, there are thousands of them. But if I try to narrow it down to what I want, there are very few, and usually they're not within my scope. I find very little anymore. Over the last three or four years I haven't found many prints on eBay. More than anything else, I've come to depend upon those dealers who bring prints to antiquarian book fairs. There have been several dealers who



FIG. 3. IVO SALIGER (GERMAN, 1894–1987), *DER ARZT, DAS MÄDCHEN, UND DER TOD* (THE DOCTOR, THE MAIDEN, AND DEATH), 1920. ETCHING, 28 3/4 X 21 INCHES (73 X 53.4 CM). COLLECTION OF WILLIAM H. HELFAND

do this, and usually they will have more prints back in their shops. If I meet them at the fairs and they do have prints, then usually I'll go to see the rest of their stock. Last year at a book fair in London, a British dealer from Bristol had brought a number of prints. I bought a few, and then I went out to Bristol, where I bought seven or eight more from him. I find this to be a very interesting source. Seeing that my age is now advanced, I don't mind telling other people that that's a good source.

**IHS** To go back to the posters—you told me about your first poster, but how would you describe the changes that have taken place in the poster market over time?

**WHH** It's harder now to find things.

**IHS** Medical posters?

**WHH** Well, any kind of posters. The market has been built up very nicely by American dealers associating themselves with French dealers, who have the greatest supply. And as the years have gone on, the early posters done in the nineteenth century have become rather rare. As for posters with medical subjects, there was really nothing made in this field in the late nineteenth century, except a few fund-raising posters for hospitals. The earliest reasonably good medical posters date from World War I, when the Rockefeller Foundation had a campaign to reduce the levels of tuberculosis and venereal disease in France at the end of the war and commissioned important artists to do posters. In more recent years they're not original posters anymore, as they were in the beginning



when Chéret, Toulouse-Lautrec, and others were creating them. As a result, the supply of important, significant posters is now smaller and smaller, so much so that I recently found myself buying a poster that I had earlier donated to the Museum—a 1911 Franz von Stuck poster advertising a hygiene exhibition in Dresden (cat. 25)—because of its rarity. These things are much harder to find. All posters, I think, are harder to find. For the last twenty years in the United States there have been poster fairs at which a number of poster dealers would join together. Prices at these fairs have generally gone up, and the objects that one really wants have become fewer and fewer. It's a microcosm of the whole print-collecting world. I think the Museum—having begun the Ars Medica Collection in the late 1940s and having expanded it—probably now has, along with maybe two or three other places in the world, the key collection that anybody would ever want to see.

**IHS** *Oh, I think so.*

**WHH** The other significant one being at the Wellcome Library in London, and perhaps there are one or two others in Europe. The Museum has a wonderful collection, and I'm happy to be able to add to it to improve it.

**IHS** *Well, there are some spectacular things in the collection, and we've had fun but also a lot of difficulty trying to figure out which posters we wanted to put in this exhibition.*

**WHH** That's a good position in which to be.

**IHS** *Yes.*

**WHH** We have exhibited several of the posters in the other exhibitions we've had, and I know the Museum has even shown posters in other places.

**IHS** *In other Museum installations.*

**WHH** Which is good. You know, I look upon these posters as having medical interest, but they're of interest in many other ways as well. When I had all these duplicates from incorporating the French collection into mine, there were many duplicates of *imagerie populaire*. I had previously given the Museum ninety-some for the exhibition you had a few years ago of *imagerie populaire* [*Curious and Commonplace: European Prints of the 1880s*], so I called in Andrea Immel, the director of the Cotsen Children's Library at Princeton University, to take her pick of the duplicates. She came twice and took many of them, because they were really made for children more than anyone else. She then put together an exhibition of these prints, including some *imagerie populaire* they already had in their collection. At the exhibition's opening, a professor from New York University gave a talk about Épinal prints and their origin. I was introduced as the donor of most of these prints, and it was explained that my interest was medical prints, but in the exhibition there was no mention of anything medical. So after the talk, while we were looking at the exhibition, a physician and his wife came over to me, and he said, "I don't understand what's medical. You're supposed to be a medical-print collector." I replied, "Well, let me show you," and we went to look at a print that showed the first half of an alphabet that Épinal had printed. The title was *Alphabet récréatif*—A is for apple, B is for baker, C is for charlatan (fig. 4). "See," I said, "there's a charlatan. It has a

medical connection, and therefore I want the print." But although the theme is medical to me, it's not to the Children's Library. This is exactly what happens elsewhere: people can look at many of these posters and see things that make them interesting because of what the artists did, irrespective of what they were trying to sell.

**IHS** *People ask me all the time, "What's your favorite thing in your department's collection?" And I never am able to answer because it changes probably several times a day.*

**WHH** Well, that's easy, because the answer I usually give is, "The last object I acquired is my favorite thing." It does change. I love so many of them. I think many nonmedical prints are fantastic, but for me medicine and pharmacy have been an organizing principle and a focus. If it were not for that, I would want to buy everything in sight, which is not a good idea. For me, it's been wise to have picked something that enables it all to hang together, and I can therefore organize what I'm doing around certain key subjects. Otherwise, it would be all over the lot.

**IHS** *But artistic merit has played a role?*

**WHH** Oh, indeed. Some of these prints and posters are absolutely wonderful. For example, there's a Louis Raemaekers poster on the evils of syphilis that is just fantastic—so powerful in its imagery (fig. 5). And from an artistic point of view, many of these posters are extremely well done. The Stuck hygiene poster from 1911 is great (see cat. 25). Several of the posters are by Chéret, who did wonderful work (cat. 10), or by other well-known people—Leonetto Cappiello, for example (cats. 28, 29, 36, 37). But others are just routine advertising posters, so they do vary considerably.

**IHS** *Was it unusual for you to acquire many prints at a time, as you did with the French collection?*

**WHH** Yes. Normally, I've added to my collection one or two objects at a time. It's been rare that I've acquired other collections en masse. Pierre Julien's collection is a great exception, and I was fortunate in getting it. After Pierre's death, his daughter asked me, "What am I going to do about this print collection?"—which was huge. I said, "Call in Paul Prouté, the dealer, and he will make an offer." When I saw her a few months later, I asked her, "What did Prouté say?" And she said, "He refused to make an offer for it"—because Pierre, like me, in many ways, was interested in the image, and in the portfolios where he had organized his prints there were newspaper cuttings, magazine pages, cards. The Prouté people simply threw up their hands; they didn't want to bother with this stuff. After this I went to look at the entire collection. I spent twelve hours going through it, because even though I had seen Pierre frequently over the years, I'd never gone through his whole collection. I looked at everything, even the saints, and realized there were many objects I didn't have, so I made what I thought was a fair offer, which they accepted. The collection arrived in New York on an Air France plane and was dumped on the pavement in front of my apartment in three huge crates. We couldn't get the crates in the apartment, so I had to hire four workers to pry open the crates and carry up the portfolios—a huge number of them. Shortly thereafter, I received a letter from Helen Horowitz, a professor of history at Smith College who was on the board of the